

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4124

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 1703

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PE

SUBJECT: PERUVIAN REQUEST TO PURCHASE A-37B'S

REF: LIMA 1382

1. DURING MY VISIT TO AIR MINISTER GILARDI FEBRUARY 14 HE MADE A SPECIAL PLEA FOR APPROVAL OF GOP'S OUTSTANDING REQUEST TO PURCHASE AN ADDITIONAL 12 A-37 B'S. HE SAID PERU WAS PREPARED TO PAY CASH OF SOME \$800,000 PER AIRCRAFT. GILARDI POINTED TO VARIOUS ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE A-37 B COMBAT-CAPABLE ADVANCED TRAINER WHICH PERUVIAN AIR FORCE WANTS TO REPLACE OBSOLESCEANT ARMED T-33'S. HE NOTED A-37B'S ARE SIMILAR TO THE T-37'S THAT PERUVIAN AIR FORCE HAS IN IT INVENTORY. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE PAF DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES WITH U.S. THROUGH USE PRIMARILY OF U.S.-TYPE EQUIPMENT.

2. GILARDI INDICATED HE THOUGHT U.S. FAILURE TO RESPOND SO FAR TO THIS PERUVIAN REQUEST MIGHT HAVE SOME POLITICAL BASIS OR OVERTONES. HE ONCE AGAIN ASSURED ME OF THE AIR FORCE'S DESIRE TO REMAIN ESSENTIALLY U.S. MAINTAINED AND SAID THE GOVERNMENT OF PERU HAS NO REPEAT NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO ITS NEIGHBORS AND IS NO COMMUNIST-ORIENTED. TO REINFORCE LATTER STATEMENT HE POINTED OUT THAT:

(A) NEW SINAMOS HEAD SALA OROZCO HAS BEEN REQUESTED TO CLEAN
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THE MARXISTS OUT OF SINAMOS, PERU'S SOCIAL MOBILIZATION ORGANIZA-

TION (WE HAVE SUBSEQUENT REPORTS THAT THIS IS BEING DONE).

(B) THE GOP IS CONCERNED OVER THE UNCONTROLLED FLOW OF PERUVIAN VISITORS TO CUBA AND OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND HAS ISSUED A DECREE LAW RESTRICTING SUCH VISITS TO NO MORE THAN THREE PERUVIANS AT A TIME UNLESS A SPECIAL MINISTERIAL GROUP APPROVES A LARGER NUMBER.

(C) THAT A RECENT EFFORT BY THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO ESTABLISH AN ARMY-TO-ARMY PENTATHLON ATHLETIC EVENT HAS BEEN VETOED IN LINE WITH GOP DESIRE TO KEEP CONTACTS WITH CUBA FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND.

3. COMMENT: AS MENTIONED REFTEL THIS EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT U.S. MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE OVERALL BALANCE OF MILITARY STRENGTH IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD IN OUR CONSIDERATION OF PERU'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT OF ALL TYPES. HOWEVER, WE FEEL THE A-37B REQUEST (TO ADD TO THE 24 THE PERUVIAN AIR FORCE ALREADY HAS ON ORDER) IS NOT EXCESSIVE, AND COULD FIT INTO OUR DESIRE TO MAINTAIN LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH PERUVIAN MILITARY OPEN AND FRIENDLY.

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